

REMARKS:

I. Introduction

In an Office Action mailed on October 17, 2008, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 5 to 8, 10 to 15, and 18 to 23. The present amendment cancels claims 21 and 23, amends claims 1, 5, 10, and 18, and adds no new claims. Accordingly, claims 1, 3, 5 to 8, 10 to 15, 18 to 20, and 22 are now pending in this application.

II. Claim Rejections Pursuant to 35 U.S.C 103

(a) The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 5 to 7, 18 to 21, and 23 pursuant to 35 U.S.C 103(a) as unpatentable over **Mickelson** (US 3,949,524) in view of **Grigi** (EP 0 842 599) and **Anderson** (US 5,397,382).

The present invention has pot (1) with a frusto-conical-shaped dome (8) and a coaster (2) with a frusto-conical-shaped dome (14). The frusto-conical shaped domes (2,8) form cooperating guide surfaces (9, 16). These guide surfaces engage each other to permit uniform guidance contact over the entire area so that the coaster and pot are both centrally aligned and parallel. That is, they are rotationally aligned so that the coupling connection can be established by a mutual twisting of the parts. Mickelson discloses a single cone which engages an opening in a wall. While this may center the tray, it does not also align the tray parallel to the pot (the cone can pivot in the opening). Grigi discloses a single cone on the pot which engages hook projections. While this may center the tray, it does not align the tray parallel to the pot (the cone can pivot in the opening). Anderson has no cone-shaped elements.

The present invention also has coupling elements (11, 15) that form a bayonet-type coupling connection so that the coaster (2) and the pot (1) are attached via relative rotational movement about the central axis. In the bayonet-type coupling connection, rotational movement is required in order to engage and disengage the connection. In an axial snap-lock connection such as that disclosed by Mickelson and Grigi, axial pressure created by plant roots extending into the holes and onto the coaster can push the coaster off. A bayonet-type connection about the central axis ensures that this does not happen because it requires rotational movement to engage and disengage the connection. The bayonet-type connection engages the connection at a right angle to the root pressure. Also, the bayonet-type connection requires relatively low engagement and disengagement forces relative to the snap-lock connection.

While Anderson indicates that a bayonet-type joint can be used between the pot and the base, no details of the joint are provided. Additionally, Anderson does not provide the deficiencies of Mickelson and Grigi (contacting conical guide surfaces for a centrally aligned and parallel position).

Independent claim 1, and claims dependent therefrom, are allowable because they each require “wherein the coupling elements (11, 15) include a plurality of openings spaced about the central axis of symmetry of the pot and a plurality of hooks cooperating with the openings to form a bayonet-type coupling connection”, “wherein each of the hooks can be axially inserted and withdrawn from a first portion of the openings and rotated about the central axis of symmetry of the pot from the first portion of the openings to a second portion of the openings from which the hooks cannot be axially withdrawn to couple the coaster and the pot against relative axial movement therebetween”, and “wherein the coaster (2) and the pot (1) are attached by axially moving the coaster relative to the pot until the guide surface of the coaster engages the guide surface of the pot so that the central axis of symmetry of the coaster is both aligned and parallel with the central axis of symmetry of the pot and the hooks are extending through the first portions of the openings and then mutually twisting the coaster and the pot about the central axis of symmetry of the pot to rotate the hooks to the second portions of the openings and couple the coaster and the pot against relative axial movement therebetween.” No prior art of record discloses or reasonably suggests the present invention as now claimed by independent claim 1. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

(b) The Examiner rejected claims 8, 10 to 12, and 22 pursuant to 35 U.S.C 103(a) as unpatentable over **Mickelson** (US 3,949,524) in view of **Grigi** (EP 0 842 599) and **Anderson** (US 5,397,382) and further in view of **Wells** (US 1,391,353).

Claims 8 to 12 are allowable as depending from allowable independent claim 1 as discussed above and also independently allowable for novel and nonobvious matter therein. It is noted that Wells does not make up for the deficiencies of Mickelson, Grigi and Anderson. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

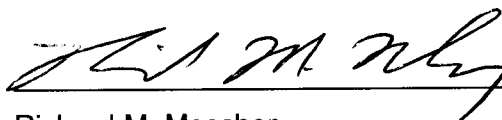
(c) The Examiner rejected claims 13 to 15 pursuant to 35 U.S.C 103(a) as unpatentable over **Mickelson** (US 3,949,524) in view of **Grigi** (EP 0 842 599) and **Anderson** (US 5,397,382) and further in view of **Wells** (US 1,391,353) and further in view of **Kay** (US 4,315,382).

Claims 13 to 15 are allowable as depending from allowable independent claim 1 as discussed above and also independently allowable for novel and nonobvious matter therein. It is noted that Wells does not make up for the deficiencies of Mickelson, Grigi, Anderson, and Wells. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

III. Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is found that the present amendment does not place the application in a condition for allowance, Applicant's undersigned attorney requests that the Examiner initiate a telephone interview to expedite prosecution of the application. If there are any fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 50-3915.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard M. Mescher
Reg. No. 38,242

PORTER, WRIGHT, MORRIS & ARTHUR LLP
41 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 227-2026
Fax: (614) 227-2100

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